

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 3-4

WASHINGTON TIMES  
16 January 1986

# INSIDE THE BELTWAY

## Flowers for Vitaly?

Soviet KGB official Vitaly Yurchenko disappeared from public view following a Moscow press conference last November and has not been heard from since. Now comes words from a Soviet "journalist" for Moscow's *Litraturnya Gazeta* that Mr. Yurchenko is "very ill."

"I read in the newspaper that he was very ill and maybe he needed some time improve his health," said Iona Andronov, a *Gazeta* agent in New York. U.S. officials remain divided on whether Mr. Yurchenko was a defector who changed his mind or was a "plant" sent by Moscow.

Mr. Andronov, besides writing for the *Gazeta*, works as a senior disinformation specialist for the Soviets, according to U.S. intelligence sources. He is credited with initiating the Soviet "line" that attempted to pin the 1981 shooting of Pope John Paul II on the CIA.

Officials who think Mr. Yurchenko was a legitimate defector have said that official statements show the Soviets planned to incarcerate Mr. Yurchenko in a psychiatric hospital. The Soviets said Mr. Yurchenko suffered "brain damage." Other intelligence experts speculate that Mr. Yurchenko may have been promoted as a result of a successful disinformation operation aimed at discrediting the CIA.

Mr. Andronov did not say whether Mr. Yurchenko's disabilities were due to the "sophisticated lobster soup" CIA security agents supposedly pressed on the hapless Soviet by the CIA on his final night in U.S. custody when, in his words, he was "forced to eat dinner in Georgetown." Pick-Me-Up bouquets, cards and other sentimental expressions may be addressed to Mr. Yurchenko, c/o

Committee on State  
Security(KGB), Dzerzhinsky  
Square, Moscow, C.C.C.P.

— John Elvin

3